one month, to all those people whose citizenship papers were revoked by the Supreme Court citing procedural mistakes while issuing them. The problem of state-less terai Nepalese is a complex and sensitive issue in Nepal and has remained unresolved for a long time. An attempt to get an amendment incorporated into the Nepal Citizenship Act of 1964 through a Finance Bill earlier this year by the Government of former Prime Minister G P Koirala also failed as the Supreme Court declared it to be unconstitutional. Some political parties of Nepal have been advocating that it can be resolved only through an amendment to the Constitution which can be achieved only through discussions and political consensus within Nepal.

Neighbourly relations with China

2655. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to improve good neighbourly relations with China; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) and (b) Government of India is committed to the development of friendly and good neighbourly relations with China on the basis of the principles of Panchsheel and mutual sensitivity to each others concerns. This has been underscored during recent high level political exchanges between India and China, including during the visit of senior Chinese leader and NPC Chairman Mr. Li Peng in January 2001 and the visit of Deputy Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha, Smt. Najma Heptulla to China in July 2001.

India and China seek a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the boundary question through peaceful consultations. We have signed an agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas in 1993 and a second agreement on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas in 1996. These two Agreements provide an institutional framework for the maintenance of peace and tranquility in the border areas. Both sides have also agreed to expedite the process of LAC clarification within existing mechanisms. The two sides have exchanged maps depicting the Line of Actual Control (LAC) as perceived by the two sides respectively in the Middle Sector of the India-China boundary. [Note: The maps of the LAC in the Middle Sector were exchanged in Beijing in November 2000 at the 8th Meeting of the Expert Group.] Both sides have reaffirmed their intention to proceed with the process of clarification and confirmation of the LAC on the basis of the 1993 Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace & Tranquility along the LAC in the India-China Border Areas.

At the 13th meeting of the India-China Joint Working Group that was held in Beijing on 31st July, 2001, both sides agreed that the present momentum in bilateral relations should be maintained and enhanced, including through further high level exchanges.

The second round of the India-China Security Dialogue was held in New Delhi earlier this year. The next round will be held in China at a mutually convenient date. India and China have established an Eminent Persons' Group. The first meeting of the Group is expected to take place later this year.

Our bilateral trade has been steadily expanding. In the year 2000, trade was US$ 2.92 billion, an increase of 47% over the previous year. As per Chinese statistics, in the first six months of year 2001, bilateral trade has reached US$ 1.79 billion, an increase of 36.5% over the same period last year. Both sides are making efforts to further expand trade and economic cooperation.

There has also been a diversification of exchanges in the fields of education, culture, science & technology, information technology, labour etc.

Use of Internet in the Country

†2656. SHRI P.K.MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the use of internet is not increasing with expected speed in the country;

(b) if so, whether more than 90 percent use of internet is in practice in developing countries;

(c) if so, the reasons for not increasing the pace of internet use in the country; and

(d) whether Government have taken any concrete steps in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) to (c) The use of Internet in India is growing at a fast pace. On March 31, 1999, the number of internet subscribers in India was 2.3 lakhs which increased to 9 43 lakhs as on 31.3.2000 and to 29.69 lakhs as on 31.3.2001. It is estimated that only 12% of Internet users in the world are in developing countries.

(d) Yes, Sir. Government has taken several steps to promote use of Internet. A list of steps taken is placed in the Statement.

Statement

Steps taken by Government for Promotion of Internet

1. Internet Service Provider (ISP) licences are given to Indian Companies on non-exclusive basis. There is no requirement of the applicant company having any prior experience in Information Technology or Telecom Services.

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.